

# Fair Culture –

Discussion  
Paper

# A Key to Sustainable Development



Based on preliminary research and interviews  
carried out between June and November 2020



Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture



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# Executive Summary

## The concept

The reflection on the concept of “fair culture” is taking place in the extraordinary context of the coronavirus pandemic. The cultural sector is hit extremely hard, and the urgency to intervene in favour of cultural and creative industries, artists and cultural professionals is being felt around the world, especially in developing countries. However, the actual crisis only exacerbates a preexisting situation: artists and other cultural professionals have always been vulnerable, particularly in developing countries.

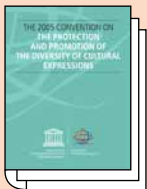
## The instruments

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1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist  
<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/status-artist>

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The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions  
<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention>



States have adopted legal instruments that contribute to promoting equity in the cultural and creative industries sector and rebalancing cultural exchanges between the Global North and the Global South. The two main instruments, the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist and the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, have stimulated important progress in the field of cultural policies and cultural cooperation. However, efforts still need to be made to improve the situation of artists and cultural professionals in developing countries and to strengthen their cultural and creative industries.

The fair trade movement has given rise to a new form of international partnership, involving the private sector and seeking to reduce inequities and promote the access of goods from southern countries to northern markets. Initially conceived as a solidarity movement between consumers in the North and disadvantaged producers in the South, fair trade has experienced many changes in the last 20 years, such as the emergence of Southern initiatives and local fair trade markets.

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17 Sustainable Development Goals  
[www.sdgs.un.org/goals](http://www.sdgs.un.org/goals)



Fair trade is based on several principles, among others the payment of a just price, the provision of capacity building and democratic decision-making. Its benefits are manifest in the economic, social and organizational spheres. Fair trade contributes to several of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (No Hunger), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), in addition to contributing indirectly to several other goals. Fair trade integrates well into a modern conception of human development, which has

redefined well-being as including non-economic indicators (health, education, social connections, environment, etc.), with a particular focus on quality of life and sustainability.

Subject to adjustments and adaptations, fair trade could inspire the emergence of a “fair culture” concept and movement that would provide similar benefits. In order to achieve such objectives, a reflection on this matter must be initiated with all stakeholders, including artists, cultural professionals, and representatives of cultural and creative industries. The first step is to consider what benefits can be expected from a concept of fair culture, how fair trade could guide the implementation of such a concept, what preoccupations lie ahead and how to move on to the next steps.

“Fostering fair and sustainable trade and exchange remains a key challenge for the cultural and creative sector. This has become even more pressing this year. We see challenges for the arts and culture resulting from measures taken to curb the Covid-19-pandemic.”

— Prof. Dr. Maria Böhmer,  
President of the German Commission for UNESCO

“Across the world, culture and creativity are vital driving forces of society. They are valuable resources – for fostering growth and change, sustainable development, opportunities and innovation.”

— Norbert Barthle,  
Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

# I. Introduction – Reflecting on the fair culture concept in the context of a pandemic: what we have learned from the ResiliArt Debates?

The reflection on the concept of fair culture is taking place in an extraordinary context, that of a health crisis of global proportions caused by the new coronavirus. While almost all sectors of the economy are severely affected, the pandemic is hitting the cultural sector extremely hard. The urgency to intervene in favour of cultural and creative industries, artists and cultural professionals is being felt around the world, especially in developing countries.

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ResiliArt online debate  
“Fair Culture – A Key to Sustainable Development”(Video)  
■ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W\\_mhDZh-s1Ak&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_mhDZh-s1Ak&feature=youtu.be)

## Cultural value chain

The ResiliArt debate sessions organized by UNESCO and other stakeholders remind us however that the actual crisis is closely related to a pre-existing situation: artists and other cultural professionals have always been vulnerable. This is why cultural policies are crucial for the entire cultural value chain: the creation, production, distribution, dissemination and access to a diversity of cultural contents.

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ResiliArt movement  
■ <https://www.unesco.de/kultur-und-natur/kulturelle-vielfalt/kunst-und-kultur-zeiten-von-covid-19>

Indeed, the discussions within the ResiliArt movement have shown that in states where a particularly well-developed cultural ecosystem was already in place before the pandemic, a rapid response capacity has been deployed, reducing the effects of the crisis. Conversely, the impact is more devastating in countries where the system of policies and measures to support artists, cultural professionals and the cultural and creative industries is poorly developed. Thus, in developing countries where artists are often marginalized, they have suffered much more from the effects of the pandemic. This health crisis only lifts the veil on a situation of imbalance that existed before. More measures must be deployed to support the cultural and creative sector in the Global South, especially as it offers – as one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy – future-oriented income and employment prospects predominantly for young adults. The support of local production and internal as well as

## On well-being of people and households

■ <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/measuring-well-being-and-progress.htm>

regional exchange in the cultural and creative sector is thus key for sustainable development in the Global South and must be at the heart of economic cooperation, ODA and an international response to Covid-19. It is interesting to note that research and new approaches put a more general focus on living conditions and on well-being of people and households (work and job quality, income and wealth, health, security, environment quality, social connections, etc.) and on how policies and measures may foster an intergenerational well-being (e.g. OECD well-being framework).

On the other hand, the pandemic has also revealed a great paradox with regard to the impacts felt in the cultural and creative industries sector. Despite the devastating effects of the pandemic for the cultural sector, some actors in the value chain have reaped enormous benefits. This is due to the fact that, thanks to digital technologies, the consumption of cultural content has been extremely high during the containment. Culture was present, perhaps more than ever before, in the homes of individuals and families. And yet, the cultural sector was largely devastated as it was mainly the web giants, as Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Netflix (GAFAN) that benefited from this increase in the consumption of cultural content. However, this situation is not totally disconnected from the preexisting context since, even before the outbreak of the pandemic, the GAFAN had begun their conquest of the web thanks to the imposition of their business model.

Once again, the pandemic only exacerbated a trend that was already taking shape before the crisis. Imbalances and inequities are increasing as revenues are concentrated in the hands of a few large multinational corporations, while content is provided by millions of artists, cultural professionals and cultural industries that have no control over these web giants. And while this inequity can be seen in almost every state on the planet, it is particularly pronounced when we compare the situation of developing countries with that of developed countries. There is a persistent imbalance in the exchange of goods and culture, with developing countries facing significant difficulties in accessing the markets of the Global North. UNESCO's 2018 Global Report "Re|Shaping Cultural Policies" clearly demonstrates these structural inequalities between the countries of the Global South and North in the cultural sector. New solutions must be found.

UNESCO's 2018 Global Report "Re|Shaping Cultural Policies"  
■ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/global-report-2018>

States have long been committed to cultural cooperation and the need to strengthen this cooperation at all levels – bilateral, regional, multilateral – was recognized even before the pandemic. Supporting artistic production, entrepreneurship and structures in the cultural sector has become an important area of Development Cooperation and Aid for Trade. However, the time has undoubtedly come to innovate and to learn from other industries and sector-strategies towards fair and sustainable value chains.

While taking into account the tools that have been developed over the last few decades to help artists, cultural professionals and cultural and creative industries in the Global South, new avenues have to be found. The solutions that will emerge will have to offer added value to what already exists, not only to reinforce the support for artists, cultural professionals, and cultural industries from the Global South, but also to fight against the iniquities and imbalances that have existed for too long.

## II. Finding inspiration in the “fair trade” movement

Fairtrade International  
🌐 <https://www.fairtrade.net/>



The fair trade movement has given rise to a new form of international partnership to reduce inequities and promote the access of goods from southern countries to northern markets. This movement, which mobilizes a vast network of producers, distributors and consumers, essentially involves the private sector, which is a notable difference from international cooperation programs initiated by state actors or NGOs. As such, the concept of fair trade brings added value compared to other forms of aid deployed for the benefit of developing countries. This movement has generated new approaches and changes of mentality in the way of thinking about international trade, first in the handi-crafts and agricultural sectors, then in such fields as textiles, mining (gold), viticulture and more recently in the tourism industry (mostly in southern Africa).

# 1. What is “fair trade”?

FINE, an association that brings together the four main fair trade networks<sup>1</sup>, defines fair trade as “a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.”<sup>2</sup>

The goals of Fair Trade that flow from this definition are:

- to improve the livelihoods and well-being of producers by improving market access, strengthening producer organizations, paying a better price and providing continuity in the trading relationship;
- to promote development opportunities for disadvantaged producers, especially women and indigenous people, and to protect children from exploitation in the production process;
- to raise awareness among consumers of the negative effects on producers of international trade so that they exercise their purchasing power positively;
- to set an example of partnership in trade through dialogue, transparency and respect;
- to campaign for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade;
- to protect human rights by promoting social justice, sound environmental practices and economic security.<sup>3</sup>

The nature of fair trade has changed much in the last 25 years, as what was a small movement of alternative organizations selling fair trade products in designated stores in the Global North has evolved into a more mainstream movement involving stakeholders from the conventional market. While there are still international networks that certify producers organizations, fair trade has become well-known for its certified products – i.e. products that display a fair trade label, for instance the Fairtrade mark – that are now sold on the shelves of conventional stores or by multinationals such as Starbucks or Nestlé.

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1 Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT), Network of World Shops (NEWS), and the European Fair Trade Association (EFTA). IFAT has since been renamed as the World Fair Trade Organization and includes the former NEWS within its membership base.

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2 Fair Trade Advocacy Office, 2018, The International Fair Trade Charter, p. 11.

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3 Redfern Andy & Paul Snedker, 2002, Creating Market Opportunities for Small Enterprises: Experiences of the Fair Trade Movement, International Labour Organization, 61 p.

## The principles of fair trade

### 2. On which principles is the concept of fair trade based?

A dozen principles can be drawn from literature, one of which is not quite explicit, but underlies the fair trade movement, namely that of market access for producers of the South, especially marginalized producers.

All fair trade actors, especially Northern partners – buyers, importers, and distributors – must be guided by the following principles in their relationships with Southern producers:

- just price (minimum guaranteed price, supplemented by a social premium);
- direct trade (with no or as few intermediaries as possible);
- long term commitment (to ensure financial stability and foster sustainable development of producer organizations);
- access to credit (pre-financing, up to 60% of contract value);
- technical support and training, and,
- consumer awareness (raising awareness in the North of the importance of buying fair trade products).

Southern organizations – i.e. producer cooperatives and small producer organizations – must also be guided by a set of principles:

- compliance with labour standards (at least meeting international standards of ILO or of the country if they are higher);
- local development (use of the premium for the benefit of the community);
- democratic and transparent organization (producers are grouped in cooperatives);
- non-discrimination (including gender equality), and,
- respect for the environment.

### 3. What are the benefits of fair trade?

Benefits of fair trade can be divided in four categories: economic, social, organizational, and environmental.

#### Economic

The most obvious economic benefit is an increase in revenues and in financial stability. While the issue of whether or not the minimum guaranteed price has a genuine impact is debated in fair trade literature – mostly because in times of high market prices the minimum guaranteed price equates the market price – it is mostly agreed that the social premium does have



an impact. Higher incomes for cooperatives in turn reduce poverty among producers.

Another benefit is better access to credit, which allows producers to obtain inputs and eventually spend the entire season without having to resort to pawnbrokers. When combined with a long-term relationship with buyers and fairer prices (premium and minimum guaranteed price), these benefits will help producers better plan their development, invest higher shares of spending on long-term investments, and make them more resilient to economic shocks.

Fair trade has provided an access to producers and groups with whom traditional firms were not interested in doing business. Certification has also increased the size of the fair trade market, since certified products can be incorporated into conventional supply chains. However, the question of whether mainstreaming (i.e. participation in fair trade of multinational businesses in the North and plantations in the South) is truly beneficial to Southern producers is subject to debate.

## Social

Literature tends to assert that social benefits of fair trade are as important, if not more important than economic benefits. This claim is based mostly on the benefits provided by the premium, also rightly referred to as “social premium.” According to fair trade principles, producers should invest the premium in social, environmental and economic developmental projects to improve their businesses and their communities.

Participation in fair trade is said to have a positive impact on producers’ self-confidence, self-esteem and well-being. Furthermore, it provides them with familial stability, reducing the likelihood that a producer will resort to migration to provide for his family, and can foster better education for younger members of their families, since increased revenues mean children won’t have to provide additional workforce or income.

Work conditions, while not quite as central as economic aspects of fair trade, are better for workers employed in a fair trade organization, since it requires that ILO standards be met as a minimum, if local labour laws are inexistent or not as stringent. Fair trade has been successful in promoting gender equality, allowing women to have access to paid work, providing them with social benefits that have positive effects on their empowerment, and in some cases even challenging social norms and roles in the household.

A less mentioned, but noteworthy benefit is fair trade's contribution to the cultural revival of indigenous communities. Among other benefits, studies have highlighted the recovery of ancestral agricultural practices, support for artisanal and other income-generating activities, and restored pride in being indigenous.

## Organizational

Organizational benefits have also been an important feature of fair trade. Capacity building is one of the most important impacts of fair trade according to literature. Producer cooperatives gain in efficiency, learning to position themselves in markets with higher added value. In addition, the high standards of fair trade, as well as the installation of new infrastructures in some cases, allow producers to ensure better quality of their products.

Another important benefit relates to democratic governance. Fair trade contributes to the strengthening of organizations by increasing the level of trust that members place in them. Changes have been perceived in the way producers participate and collaborate in production, processing and marketing. Furthermore, producer organizations have an increased capacity to dialogue with public authorities and to propose policies to support the sector. They have been able to develop partnerships with NGOs and new contact networks with other participants in fair trade.

The fair trade label contributes to raising awareness, bringing to the forefront disadvantaged rural populations, long neglected and unrepresented. Through fair trade, the voice of small producers and isolated rural populations are now heard at higher levels. In the North, fair trade organizations have also conducted advocacy work to bring about more equitable trading practices along the entire supply chains of large companies.

## Environmental

Finally, in terms of environmental benefits, fair trade provides the means to support the transition to sustainable production and consumption patterns. Remunerative prices or long-term commercial commitments, for example, facilitate the change of a sector, for instance of an agricultural system towards agro-ecological models. Moreover, strict regulations on the use of chemical products help to preserve biodiversity.

## 4. How does fair trade contribute to the SDGs?

17 Sustainable Development Goals  
[www.sdgs.un.org/goals](http://www.sdgs.un.org/goals)



Fair trade contributes to several of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by all United Nations Member States in 2015.

SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (No Hunger) are at the heart of fair trade. The minimum price provided for by fair trade standards protects producers from market fluctuations and provides them with a more stable income. They can invest in their business, ensure long-term food security for their families and communities, and pay a decent wage to their farm workers. Cooperatives invest a large part of the premium in strengthening their organization and providing support and services to their members and, by extension, to their communities.

Working with marginalized farmers and artisans and helping to build capacity contributes to income growth in developing countries, thus contributing to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). Fair Trade seeks greater equity in international trade by linking the goals of those in the North seeking greater sustainability and justice to the needs of those in the South who need these changes most.

Fair trade also supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by supporting better employment conditions covering hours of work and overtime, contracts and temporary work, timely compensation and fair wages, and workers' rights such as collective bargaining and freedom of association. It also prohibits child and forced labour.

Fair trade's global campaign for trade justice, supported by thousands of cities, schools, universities, local governments and religious organizations, as well as millions of consumers, contributes to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). It helps consumers make sustainable choices that ensure that producers get fairer prices, thereby strengthening their ability to implement sustainable production patterns.

Fair trade supports SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by helping women to participate equally in the decisions of their organizations, to earn better wages – and equal pay for

equal work - and to diversify their incomes. Fair trade standards prohibit sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence, set rules for parental leave, and provide rights for pregnant and nursing women. Fair trade provides opportunities for women and other under-represented groups in skilled professions or management positions.

Fair trade also contributes to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), since its standards provide that cooperatives must be democratic, transparent and inclusive. For example, they decide for themselves how to invest the premium. The premium can be invested by the cooperatives in social projects, such as education (SDG 4 – Quality Education), health (SDG 3 – Good Health), as well as sustainability (SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities). The premium allows farmers to become more resilient to extreme weather conditions and crop diseases, therefore contributing to SDG 13 (Climate Action). More generally, fair trade cooperatives practice and promote responsible resource management and environmentally sustainable practices, including reducing, reusing, recovering and recycling materials wherever possible.

Finally, Fairtrade International and other fair trade organizations work with governments to establish fairer trade practices, essential for sustainable economic growth, thus supporting SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

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Fairtrade International  
🌐 <https://www.fairtrade.net/>



“We consider that the concept of fair trade conveys values, objectives and principles that are perfectly transposable to the cultural sector, has the potential to mobilize private actors and could provide similar benefits. Our challenge now is to translate this reflection into practice, taking into account the particularities of the cultural value chain.”

— Prof. Dr. Véronique Guèvremont,  
Chairholder, University of Laval, Québec/Canada, UNESCO  
Chair on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

# III. What we have learned from the implementation of relevant legal instruments?

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1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist

■ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/status-artist>

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The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

■ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention>



States have adopted legal instruments that contribute to promoting equity in the cultural and creative industries sector and rebalancing cultural exchanges between the Global North and the Global South. At the multilateral level, the two main instruments in this regard are the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter the 2005 Convention). Three years ago, the Aschberg programme for artists and cultural professionals was redesigned by the Secretariat of the 2005 Convention in order to provide more synergy between these instruments. Although both have stimulated important progress in the field of cultural policies and cultural cooperation, monitoring of their implementation shows that efforts still need to be made to improve the situation of artists and cultural professionals in developing countries and to strengthen their cultural and creative industries.

## 1. The 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist

While the 1980 Recommendation is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2020, this instrument seems more important than ever. Artists remain vulnerable and they don't enjoy the same level of protection as many other workers in a society. The current health crisis highlights again the importance of social protection schemes in the cultural sector, still not in place in many countries worldwide. Also, despite some positive developments, it is generally more difficult for artists from the Global South to travel to the Global North today than it was in 1980 (UNESCO, Culture and working conditions for artists, 2019, p. 58). The recognition of their status is a crucial step to promote their rights and artistic freedom in their own country and abroad.

The protection of their copyright is also a fundamental condition to ensure fair remuneration. On this matter, it becomes urgent to reinforce the protection of artists

UNESCO, Culture and working conditions for artists, 2019

■ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/publications/culture-working-conditions-artists>



in the digital environment. As mentioned in a recent Report on the implementation of the Recommendation about the digital shift, “there is a global consensus that artists have lost income overall” (UNESCO, 207 EX/23.VI, para. 5), “while techno companies are making unprecedented amounts of money from the marriage of culture with technology, creating an economic imbalance” (UNESCO, Culture and working conditions for artists, 2019, p. 32). There is also a huge imbalance in income distribution, as 5% of artists receive 95% of royalties (id., p. 35). Finally, new concerns are arising regarding the availability and discoverability of local content, these aspects having a direct impact on the remuneration of artists.

## 2. The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

### Ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges

One of the main objectives of the 2005 Convention is “to strengthen international cooperation and solidarity in a spirit of partnership with a view, in particular, to enhance the capacities of developing countries” (Article 1(i)). Another objective is “to encourage dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world” (Article 1(c)). To this end, the 2005 Convention contains an important mechanism for international cooperation and solidarity, including commitments that are among the most binding of this treaty. This is the case of Article 16, which commits developed countries to “facilitate cultural exchanges with developing countries by granting, through the appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, preferential treatment to artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as cultural goods and services from developing countries.” As the 2005 Convention celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2020, developed countries are adopting few preferential treatment measures consistent with Article 16. Much remains to be done to facilitate access to their cultural markets by countries of the Global South. Capacity-building measures must also be renewed, particularly to foster the emergence of local markets and stimulate local demand.

In the context of the pandemic and the devastating effects on the cultural sector, the implementation of these commitments has become crucial. But it is also necessary to go further.

## The private sector has to get involved

On the one hand, existing cooperation measures must be improved by the Parties. The study “Cultural and Creatives Industries Supporting Activities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Mapping and Analysis” calls for instance for more bottom-up programs and new approaches to get closer to local needs, contexts and priorities (Pedro Affonso Ivo Franco, Kimani Njogu, 2020, p. 55). On the other hand, even if they are not directly involved in the 2005 Convention, private actors must be mobilized to a greater extent, especially the web giants who have become both those responsible for amplifying inequities and those who benefit the most from them.

Indeed, the private sector has to be involved in multi-stakeholder initiatives that aim at promoting a more equitable culture, supporting local artists and professionals, local production and local consumption, and rebalancing cultural exchanges. This includes the digital platforms, which must offer fair remuneration to artists and cultural professionals, and contribute to the development of strong cultural and creative industries in all countries where they target audiences, and particularly in developing countries. In this regard, the cultural sector could potentially learn from recent initiatives towards fair and sustainable supply chains in other sectors. In Germany for instance “the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles” was launched in 2014 by the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development together with representatives of the private sector and civil society. Moreover, the independently certified state-run “Green Button” textile certification mark initiated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in 2019 could serve as a model for the creative and cultural industries.

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Partnership for Sustainable Textiles  
■ <https://www.bmz.de/en/issues/textilwirtschaft/textilbuendnis/index.html>

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Green Button  
■ <https://www.gruenerknopf.de/en>

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Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)  
■ <https://www.bmz.de/de/index.html>

# IV. Designing the “fair culture” concept: key questions

## Fair culture concept

The concept of “fair trade” conveys values, objectives and principles that are transposable to the cultural and creative industries sector. Subject to adjustments and adaptations, fair trade could inspire the emergence of a “fair culture” concept and movement that would provide similar benefits. Just as fair trade contributes to the achievement of several SDGs, the concept of fair culture could lead to similar progress. In order to achieve such objectives, a reflection on this matter must be initiated with all stakeholders, including artists, cultural professionals, and representatives of cultural and creative industries. In this process, particular attention must be paid to the impact of the digital transformation. As a first step, the following topics could be addressed:

### 1. Benefits could be expected from the use of the fair culture concept

Like fair trade, a fair culture movement could generate economic, social, organizational and environmental benefits.

## Economic

For example, at the economic level, concerns about the revenues and the financial stability of artists and cultural professionals could be at the heart of a fair culture movement. The erosion of artists’ income linked to the business model of platforms operating on the Web must be part of the reflections to be carried out on this subject. There can be no fair culture without a reform of the current remuneration system. To achieve this objective, work to enforce and strengthen copyright and authors’ rights will have to be carried out, in collaboration with the collective management organizations.

## Social

In terms of social benefits, the concept of premium could be explored to stimulate new forms of investment in the cultural and creative industries sector, either to support the creation or production of new cultural content and promote their discoverability, to develop the cultural infrastructures, to finance training and education projects, or to satisfy other needs. Fair culture could also provide important organizational benefits.



By coming together in associations (for example, sector-based associations – music, film, visual arts, etc.), artists and cultural professionals would be empowered; by speaking as a single and unified voice and representing a whole sector within a community or country, they would more easily make their demands and needs heard. Being organized would also facilitate their participation in capacity building activities (for instance, groups trainings) and make it easier for them to participate in decisions regarding the use of the premium, as those associations would function in a democratic manner.

## 2. Fair trade principles could guide the implementation of the fair culture concept

Several principles of fair trade could be integrated into the cultural and creative industries sector to reduce inequities and facilitate North-South cultural exchanges. Fair price, technical support and training, local development and gender equity are highly relevant principles for improving the well-being of artists and cultural professionals.

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OECD Guidelines for  
Multinational Enterprises  
■ <http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/guidelines/>

New principles could also be added. For instance, inspired by the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, a principle of “contribution to public finance” could be attached to the fair culture concept, which could include the payment of taxes in accordance with local laws, but also the contribution to funds supporting the creation of new cultural content. Another relevant principle could aim at promoting cultural diversity and protecting local contents.

## Fair culture and digital platforms: A case study to be developed

Digital platforms are transforming the cultural and creative industries sector. A fair culture movement could promote to these actors principles such as:

- fair compensation for the acquisition of local works;
- accessibility/visibility of local works on their platform;
- contribution to independently and transparently managed creative support funds;
- respect of local tax laws;
- capacity building, for instance by providing training to local artists and cultural professionals to help them create quality content adapted to the digital environment;
- actions to promote gender equality, reflected in the diversity of cultural content available on their platform;
- adoption of measures to reduce the environmental impact of their activities, particularly with regard to greenhouse gas emissions.

### 3. Several needs and preoccupations could be addressed through the concept of fair culture

Studies on cultural cooperation point to the needs and preoccupations expressed by the countries of the Global South to strengthen their capacities in the cultural and creative industries sector and to access the market of the Global North. Legislative and regulatory gaps, the informal nature of the cultural and creative industries sector, the deficit in cultural infrastructure and technological means, obsolete tax rules, the lack of private investment and weak local demand are some of the problems identified in a number of reports.

Digital transformations have also brought new concerns, particularly with regard to the remuneration of artists. Finally, in the context of the pandemic, emergency situations have also emerged.

## 4. The development of a fair culture movement would require the mobilization of actors from the North and the South

As it has been mentioned above, fair trade principles – and therefore responsibilities – are divided between those applicable to actors from the Global North and those that apply to actors from the Global South. If the fair culture movement is to be successful, it will also need to mobilize both northern and southern stakeholders.

### Premium

A good example is that of the premium. Under the fair culture principles, online platforms that distribute cultural content in the North – whether music, films, series or books – would be required to reinvest part of the profits – or a premium – in a fund whose purpose would be to contribute to the production of cultural content (creating a responsibility for Northern actors of fair culture). The premium could also be used for the acquisition of infrastructures or digital tools.

The fund would be accessible to an independent organization of artists in the relevant cultural sector whose members would be appointed democratically by an association of artists (principle of democracy and transparency) and would decide how to reinvest this premium, keeping in mind that this should serve the benefit of the local artist community (principle of local development).

### The role of consumers

The role consumers can play in making fair culture a successful initiative must be emphasized. Without a solid base of consumers interested in paying a higher price for cultural consumption, fair culture will not produce the desired effects. It will be crucial to build a strategy aimed at raising consumer awareness of the situation of artists and cultural professionals – particularly in the South – as well as developing consumer interest towards both local and foreign cultural products and services. In that sense, the pandemic offers an opportunity to raise awareness, considering the comforting role culture has played during the lockdown. Many people relied extensively on culture to get through the lockdown, but in the meantime the sector has suffered. Furthermore, the public sector could have a role to play, for example by promoting fair culture during public events, and even procure fair culture goods and services in organizing these events. Awareness raising activities should be carried out at an early – even preliminary – stage and throughout the process.

## 5. How to move forward to the next steps?

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Fair Trade Charter  
■ <https://www.fair-trade.website/the-charter-1>

The WFTO and Fairtrade International have drafted a Fair Trade Charter in consultation with other actors, with the aim of producing a common reference document for the global fair trade movement. The Charter supports the work of fair trade organizations in raising awareness among consumers and citizens, facilitates collaboration among fair trade organizations by connecting their specific missions and strategies with the common philosophy of the movement, and enables others who work with these organizations to recognize the values and approaches that unite the global movement. Such a tool could serve as a reference document for an emerging fair culture movement, and right from the beginning ensure a common understanding of the concept and a unity in the movement.

### Fair culture label

Another step would be to create a fair culture label, which could be applied to fair trade products sold on shelves of retailer stores, through electronic commerce or on streaming platforms. Specific sections showcasing fair trade products would increase the visibility of these products, and an informative section on how a part of the profits are redistributed in the form of a premium to be reinvested in the community where the work was produced could play a role in raising awareness about the fair culture movement.

### Process of certification

Finally, a reflection on the process of certification would be helpful as a starting point to define standards that could guide the selection of fair culture partners in the North as well as in the South. This process would aim to ensure that every fair culture labelled product provided to a consumer has been produced by a certified artist or group of artists that has been paid a fair price, and that artists and other actors along the chain (distributors, online platform, etc.) comply with fair culture standards, that these actors pay the premium and that artists invest the benefits in their development and that of their community.

Fair culture could take example on Fairtrade International, who created an independently governed body (FLOCERT) that audits and certifies Fairtrade members. This type of certification by a third-party organization provides the consumer with a higher guarantee. However, it involves significant costs that can be a burden for producers. Questions will arise as to who would pay these certification fees. On the other hand, other fair

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FLOCERT  
■ <https://www.flocert.net/>

trade models could serve as an example for alternative certification systems (such as WFTO, EFTA). For instance, fair culture could develop a process based on participatory or cross certification, where member organizations certify other member organizations. This could offer a less expensive alternative that provides participants with capacity building opportunities; however, participatory certification offers fewer guarantees for consumers with respect to the production process. This decision will have to be made early on.

## Beneficiaries of fair culture

The most important step before considering these, however, will be to define who the beneficiaries of fair culture are. Fair trade has always targeted the most disadvantaged. However, the term “disadvantaged” will have to be defined for the purposes of the fair culture movement. Criteria will need to be developed on which this designation can be based (marginalization, income, location, etc.). In this regard, other questions will arise later in the process to ensure the movement can adapt to the progressive strengthening of the cultural sector in the Global South and the constant emergence of new artists or cultural professionals in need. This step – defining the beneficiaries – will be crucial to ensure that fair culture is beneficial to those who need it the most.

# Fair Culture at a Glance: The ResiliArt debate of November 19, 2020

What are the main principles that could guide a future “fair culture” practice? What needs and concerns are to be prioritized when implementing the concept? What would be both urgent and doable? What other benefits might result thereof? What are the responsibilities of stakeholders from the Global North and South?

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ResiliArt online debate  
“Fair Culture – A Key to Sustainable Development”  
(Video)  
■ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W\\_mhDZh-s1Ak&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_mhDZh-s1Ak&feature=youtu.be)

These questions were addressed during the ResiliArt online debate “Fair Culture – A Key to Sustainable Development” on November 19, 2020. International experts and practitioners from the fields of fair trade, development cooperation, culture and creative industries as well as representatives of the public sector jointly discussed the concept of “fair culture” against the background of the Covid-19 crisis. The debate was part of the UNESCO-led initiative “ResiliArt”, a global effort to support artists and cultural producers during the pandemic.

## Local markets and businesses: how to support Fair Cultural consumption?

Creative entrepreneurs and small businesses are part of both the global economy and regional markets. Their products do not always find acceptance in local markets, as a fashion designer from Kenya stated during the debate. Cultural products and services from the Global South are still not equally valued as those from the Global North by many middle-class Global South consumers who would have the necessary purchasing power.

However, in Kenya, some positive changes can be noted over the last decade: Local preference, transparency and skills transfer are increasingly being appreciated. This could strengthen small businesses and foster greater local awareness. This points to the fact that fair culture must come along with a real change process, and not simply by the use of a fair trade label, as an independent publisher from Morocco pointed out.

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Fairtrade International  
■ <https://www.fairtrade.net/>



This approach is in line with the strategic orientation of Fairtrade International, which seeks to transfer the original idea of the fair trade movement to other sectors in the course of its 2025 strategy, including creative industries, as emphasized by its CEO.

There is a strong potential for cross-cutting opportunities and technological impact of fair culture standards, which could be achieved through the use of digital applications and data. This could help to reduce inequalities, foster stability as well as reliable contracts, and establish a fair pricing system in all sectors with poor working conditions.

## The role of the public sector to initiate change towards a fair culture development

In addition to private businesses, consumers and the society as a whole, public sector initiatives are essential to stimulate the development of Fair Culture standards and implement them through public and not-for-profit procurement.

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Ethical Fashion Initiative  
■ <https://ethicalfashioninitiative.org/>

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“Green Button”  
 (“Gruener Knopf”)  
■ <https://www.gruenerknopf.de/en>

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UN guiding principles  
on business and human  
rights  
■ <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/2>

The EU supports the Ethical Fashion Initiative, whereby a compliance scheme has been introduced so that the final consumer is able to see the full story and value chain behind the finished product. Another successful example is the German government-run certification label for sustainable textiles “Green Button” (“Gruener Knopf”), introduced in 2019. It focuses both on the final product and on the company where it was produced. In order to obtain the “Green Button” label, a number of minimum social and ecological standards must be met, which are based on the UN guiding principles on business and human rights.

## The way forward

As a result of the November 19, 2020 debate, one thing is clear: the creative and cultural sector offers an immense potential worldwide, not only in providing space for lively discussions, human interaction and changes of perspective, which can transform societies.

It is also a growing economic sector, which is going to be key for sustainable development. The implementation of fair labour standards in the cultural sector can bring

about a genuine change and reduce structural inequalities between countries of the Global South and North.

Thus, it is vital to mobilize both the private sector and the general public and involve them in multi-stakeholder initiatives to promote a more equitable culture sector, by supporting local artists as well as local consumption. This would have an impact on the whole cultural value chain, from creation to distribution, access and enjoyment of the cultural good or service and lead to a more balanced exchange of cultural goods and services in a “fair culture” perspective. New solutions must be found, current concepts adapted and different parties and stakeholders involved in order to achieve medium- and long-term sustainable changes.

## Further information

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“Fair Culture” initiative  
📄 <https://www.unesco.de/en/culture-and-nature/cultural-diversity/cultural-diversity-worldwide/fair-trade-fair-culture>

German Commission for UNESCO,  
“Fair Culture” initiative



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While the idea of fair trade to tackle poor labour standards and global inequalities has been widely implemented in some economic sectors over the last decades, it has not yet been applied to the culture and creative sectors. In the context of increasing global networking and digitalization, innovative approaches for fair production and fair exchange of cultural goods and services must be developed. This was discussed on November 19, 2020, in the ResiliArt-online debate on “Fair Culture – A Key to Sustainable Development.”

The debate is available at:

[www.unesco.de](http://www.unesco.de)